



Region One
490 North Meridian Rd.
Kalispell, MT 59901
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Ref:JS059-12
July 16, 2012

TO: * Governor's Office, Attn: Mike Volesky, PO Box 200801, Helena, 59620-0801
* Environmental Quality Council, PO Box 20, Helena, 59620-1704
* Dept. of Environmental Quality, Planning, Prevention & Assistance, PO Box 200901, Helena, 59620-0901
* Dept. of Environmental Quality, Permitting Compliance, PO Box 200901, Helena, 59620-0901
* Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Director's Office – Reg Peterson, Legal Unit – Jessica Snyder; Rebecca Cooper
* Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes, PO Box 278, Pablo, 59855
* DNRC, PO Box 201601, Helena, 59620-1601 (Patty Greene)
* DNRC, Steve Frye, Kalispell
* Montana Historical Society, SHPO, 225 North Roberts, Veteran's Memorial Building, Helena, 59620
* Montana State Library, 1515 East Sixth Ave., Helena, 59620-1800
* Adam McLane, Montana Environmental Information Center, PO Box 1184, Helena, 59624
George Ochenski, 4 Harrison Road, Helena, MT 59601
* Wayne Hirst, Montana State Parks Foundation, PO Box 728, Libby, 59923
* Montana State Parks Association, PO Box 699, Billings, 59103
* Joe Gutkoski, President, Montana River Action Network, 304 N 18th Ave., Bozeman, 59715
* Representatives Janna Taylor, Joe Read, Scott Reichner & Mark Blasdel
* Senators Carmine Bowbray, Shannon Augare & Verdell Jackson
Flathead County Commissioners, 800 S Main Street, Kalispell, MT 59901
Interested parties

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP), Region One, has completed an environmental assessment (EA) for a proposed action involving agricultural activities being performed by a private operator to supplement agency activities aimed at improving food and cover managed as wildlife habitat at the North Shore State Park/Wildlife Management Area in Flathead County, Montana.

The draft EA was out for a 2-week public review through July 12, 2012. Seven comments were received, six in favor of the project. The other comment expressed concern about increased crop damage caused by deer and increased risk of vehicle collisions on the adjacent highway. Although the farming will provide some benefit for white-tailed deer, we do not expect this action to increase deer populations or deer use of the fields because this farming proposal would implement farming practices similar to those in the past and on neighboring farm fields. This proposal is intended to benefit primarily waterfowl and upland game birds.

There were no modifications to the draft EA; therefore, the plan is accepted as written, and the draft EA and the decision notice serve as the final document. Based on the EA and public comment, it is recommended that the Commission approve the North Shore SP/WMA farming proposal as written.

Sincerely,

Jim Satterfield Jr., Ph.D.
Regional Supervisor

Enclosure
c: Interested Parties
* E-mailed



Region 1
490 North Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901

North Shore SP/WMA Farming Decision Notice

July 16, 2012

Proposal:

The proposed action involves a 3-year share-cropping agreement with a private operator for farming to improve food and cover for wildlife, particularly spring migrating waterfowl and upland birds, on the North Shore State Park/Wildlife Management Area (SP/WMA).

Environmental Policy Act Process:

FWP is required to assess potential impacts of the proposed project to the human and physical environment. In compliance with requirements of the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), a draft environmental assessment (EA) was completed by FWP and released for a 2-week public comment period from June 28 through July 12, 2012. Public notices were posted in local newspapers and libraries, and copies of the EA were available at the Region One headquarters in Kalispell and on the FWP website. The proposal was also covered in a news story on Montana Public Radio on July 10.

Public Comments:

Seven comments were received, six in favor of the project; the other expressed concerns about potential impacts to neighboring properties (see below). There were no modifications to the draft EA based on public comment, and the draft EA and decision notice serve as the final document.

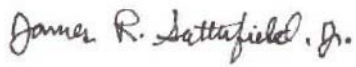
Summary of Issues Addressed in the EA:

One person expressed concern that our farming activities may increase crop damage on neighboring properties as a result of more deer using the FWP fields and potentially increase risk of deer collisions on the highway. Although the farming will provide some benefit for white-tailed deer, we do not expect this action to increase deer populations or deer use of the fields because this farming proposal would implement farming practices similar to those in the past and on neighboring farm fields. This proposal is intended to benefit primarily waterfowl and upland game birds.

Decision

Through the MEPA process, FWP found no significant impacts on the human or physical environments associated with this proposal. Therefore, the EA is the appropriate level of analysis, and an environmental impact statement is not required.

Based on the EA and public comment, it is my decision to recommend that the Commission approve the North Shore SP/WMA farming proposal as written.



July 16, 2012

James R. Satterfield Jr., Ph.D.
Regional Supervisor

Date